

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

St. MARY'S CHURCH,

IN

SCARBOROUGH,

BEFORE THE

LOYAL VOLUNTEERS
OF THAT PLACE,

On SUNDAY the 12th of OCTOBER, 1794.

By JOHN KIRK^K, M.A.

VICAR OF SCARBOROUGH, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE CORPS.

Sanctus amor Patriæ dat Animum.

Y O R K:

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M.DCC.XCIV,



TO
JAMES TINDALL, ESQUIRE,
MAJOR-COMMANDANT,
AND THE
OFFICERS OF THE SCARBOROUGH VOLUNTEERS,
THE
FOLLOWING DISCOURSE
(PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST)
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR FAITHFUL
AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

J. KIRK,

JAMES HINDALL, ESQUIRE,

MAJOR-COMMANDANT,

AND THE

OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT OF FOOT GUARDS,

THE

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REGIMENT OF FOOT GUARDS,

BY THEIR ORDER,

AND GENERAL ORDER,

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THE PRAYER.

O Lord God of Hosts, look down, we beseech thee, on us thy unworthy creatures here assembled before thee; and assist us with thy blessed Spirit, and the Power of thine Arm, to withstand the Temptations of the World, and the malicious assaults of our Enemies, both temporal and spiritual. “Send us help from thy
“holy place, and evermore mightily defend us.” “Our Fathers
“trusted in thee: they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them:”
may we in like manner, by thy Grace, be rendered worthy of thy Favour and Protection! Bless and preserve our rightful Sovereign King George, and his Royal Family. Defend him from all secret Conspiracies and open Violence. “Be thou to him an Helmet of
“Salvation against the face of his Enemies, and let not the Wicked
“approach to hurt him.” Grant success to our Arms, both by Sea and Land. Bless the laudable Exertions of the Loyal Volunteers of this place, in the faithful Discharge of their Duty. May they acquit themselves as becometh thy faithful Soldiers and Servants, and boldly stand forth, in this hour of danger, in defence of our Constitution, our Country, and our King! And may we all, of every rank and degree, exert our utmost efforts for the protection of our holy Religion, and whatever else is, or ought to be, dear to

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us as a Christian People ! Be it also permitted us, O Lord, our defence, to pray for the disappointment of those men of fraud and deceit, whom the prospect of plunder or a thirst for power hath inspired with foul designs—aiming at no less than the subversion of our happy Constitution in Church and State. May the unparalleled benefits of a mild and regal Government still be ours ! and may Liberty, founded on law, and supported by order, ever continue the distinguishing glory of our Isle ! And, O thou, that “ stillest “ the rage of the ocean, and the tumult of the people,” suppress all the risings of sedition, and “ restrain the remainder of the “ wrath” of our enemies ! stay, we entreat thee, the progress of the devouring Sword : “ make wars to cease in all the world,” and bring the present dreadful conflict to a speedy and a happy termination : that we may soon meet again in this place, to return our unfeigned thanks to Thee, the only giver of victory, who art not slow to hear, and who art omnipotent to save. Grant this, O heavenly Father, and whatever else thou seeest needful or expedient for us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

LUKE xxii. CHAP. 36th VERSE.

HE THAT HATH NO SWORD, LET HIM SELL HIS GAR-
MENT, AND BUY ONE.

THIS is the direction of our blessed Lord, “ the Cap-
tain of our Salvation :” a direction which he gave to
his beloved disciples and faithful adherents at the eve of
approaching danger. Probably, at the first hearing, it may
be considered as a strange doctrine to have been delivered by
the Prince of Peace, that there are certain times and cir-
cumstances when the habiliments of war are more necessary,
and even to a Christian more suitable, than the robes of
Peace. How can this be deemed consistent with that pa-
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tience under sufferings, that toleration of injuries, that very love of enemies, which is throughout the tenor of the Gospel? Is this the language of him, who tamely suffered himself to be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" and, though he could have summoned, instead of twelve Apostles, "twelve legions of angels" to his Assistance, yet never employed them as ministers of vengeance, but only as announcers of "good tidings," proclaiming "peace on earth, good will towards men?" Why does he propose to his disciples to furnish themselves with Swords, even though they should be obliged to "sell their Garments" to procure them; and then "rebuke Peter," for drawing his Sword in his defence, in such terms as these, "Put again thy Sword into his place: for all they that take the Sword shall perish with the Sword?"

THESE two passages of sacred writ, that addressed to St. Peter, and this in my text, will appear, no doubt, superficially considered, to admit of very opposite interpretations. At the same time, if we carefully examine the circumstances and occasions of their delivery, we shall find them not only consistent with each other, but explaining and illustrating the
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the whole doctrine of going to war, and shewing when it is lawful and allowable, and when not.

THE Case of St. Peter appears to have been this. On the spur and impulse of the occasion, from the natural warmth of his temper, and his strong attachment to his Lord and Master, but without his order or consent, he had drawn his Sword in his defence, and wounded a Servant of the High Priest, in the due execution of his office, and acting under a commission from a lawful authority. And therefore our Lord orders him to "put up his Sword," because the occasion did not warrant such a violent proceeding; admonishing him at the same time, that "all they that take the Sword," on unwarrantable grounds and occasions, and without a lawful call from a proper authority, "shall perish with the Sword;" that is, shall be accountable to a superior power for a breach of the public peace, or else ultimately experience the Divine Vengeance.

BUT there is no proof to be made out by any way of inference from hence, that on just and lawful and necessary occasions, it is not allowable to "take the Sword;" because

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the circumstances of this case point out a plain and manifest impropriety in it. Submission to Authority, lawfully constituted and appointed, is all that is to be inferred from hence : and this is indeed strongly implied in this, as it is more expressly inculcated in numerous other passages of Scripture.

BUT now the direction in the text, if it have any meaning at all, implies plainly, that circumstances of danger require self-defence and a necessary guard, and even weapons of offence to repel force by force ;—supposing only, what is to be understood of course, that the occasion is lawful as well as urgent. And though our Lord never meant to have his own direction put in force ; though, when it was reported to him, that there were “ two Swords ” in the company, he said, “ It is enough ; ” though he “ rebuked Peter ” for using his Sword in his defence ; yet the reason of all this, besides what has been mentioned, was because “ His Kingdom was not of this World.” Had it been otherwise, (which seems the very case in point to which the text alludes) had he been seated on the temporal Throne of his father David, and had a temporal Government to support
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against the assaults of temporal Enemies, he would of course have had recourse to the same Arms, as the rulers of God's chosen People had always used before for the same purposes by God's own direction, and as even Christians must now do, who have a " Kingdom of this World" to uphold, in connection and alliance with that of another.

AND even taking the Text in a figurative sense, as has generally been done, as an injunction to the Apostles to arm themselves with spiritual weapons against spiritual enemies, with watchfulness to guard against surprizes, and with courage to withstand the strong temptations then about to assail them, we may justly and safely infer both the lawfulness and the necessity of taking up, in like manner, natural arms against natural enemies, when the occasion calls for it, and when no other lawful remedy is to be had. Indeed we are not to expect in the gospel, to meet with encouragement to provoke us to such a measure. On the contrary, we are even bidden, " Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other;" that is, to bear provocations, even repeated ones, is more becoming that temper of mind which the Gospel is designed to form in us, than to requite

ill offices, and disturb the peace of Society by endless quarrels and dissensions. Besides that, the Gospel does not make it its Business to interfere in our worldly concerns, nor establish itself as "a Judge, or a divider over us." All that we can expect from it is a permission, rather than an incentive, to undertake the means of our lawful defence. The natural passions of men require restraining, rather than inflaming: and their natural interests are sufficiently ready to direct them to the redress of their wrongs. But when our nearest and dearest interests are at stake; when the lives of individuals, and the public Safety of the State, which binds us together in Society for our mutual comfort and security, are in danger; there is then no authority to be brought from Scripture, to discountenance the free use of every necessary means of defence, or even of aggression, to make a more secure and more provident defence. In this case, great Sacrifices are to be made; superfluous, and even necessary expences to be retrenched; insomuch that "he that hath no Sword," should even "sell his Garment, and buy one."

FROM hence, then, we may reasonably infer this important

tant truth: that notwithstanding those evangelical precepts of meekness, patience, forgiving and praying for our Enemies; still the use of just arms is in all ages of Christianity lawful; nay, in some exigencies of times, a duty more incumbent than even Peace itself: that Christians, like other men, may provide themselves with instruments of war, not to commit the least private injury, but for their own Defence; and particularly may stand forth, when lawfully called upon, to assist the civil State of which they are members, and to support the cause of their temporal Princes.— And if ever there was a time, a country, a society of men, to which our holy Religion has, in an especial manner, recommended the use of the Sword, or the due preparations for using it; it is the present conjuncture—this likewise is the Country—such also the Association of you, the loyal Volunteers of this Place, who have incorporated yourselves for the protection of our Laws and Liberties—for the defence of our Church and State, against foreign and domestic Enemies; and who have so gracious a Sovereign to serve with your Purfes, your Swords, your Lives.

THIS Nation has heretofore experienced the dire calamities

mities of War on various occasions. At one time we have fought for a particular form of Government—at another for Commerce—sometimes for the succession of Princes, or a certain space of Territory. Those wars have been maintained with chearful submission, and carried on with vigour. Shall we then be tamely passive at this alarming crisis, when we are called upon to unite in our own defence against a numerous and formidable Enemy, who would exult in the subversion of our establishment both in Church and State, and who, if possible, would bereave us of the Comforts of our holy Religion? Men, who have brought desolation on their own Country, and are endeavouring, at this very day, to reduce all others to the same wretched situation? who, actuated by a spirit truly anti-christian, have sallied forth in lawless multitudes to neighbouring countries, with the manifest intention of destroying all order among mankind, and introducing in its stead nothing but perplexity and ruin; declaring War against all laws, both human and divine?

TILL they thus began to disturb the peace of other Countries, we of this Nation studiously avoided all interference with them. But when, with malicious artifice, they were
detected

detected in exciting Sedition amongst our own people; surely at such a time it became incumbent on all ranks and degrees of men, who prefer order to anarchy, to exert their united efforts, in order to frustrate the wicked intentions of those Enemies to our peace, “ who trust in violence and delight “ in Blood.” More especially as it has been discovered, that not a few of our fellow-subjects,—persons not very respectable in private life, but, for the most part, men of unbounded ambition and desperate fortunes,—have (to the disgrace of Britons be it named) adopted their plans of mischief, and united with them in their bold designs. And now, at a moment when every particle of our strength should be collected and combined for our defence and protection, how alarming our situation, to find the very sinews of Government attacked by intestine Commotion and civil Faction! God grant that the severe but just punishments, which have recently overtaken some of our unhappy Fellow-Citizens, may prove a loud warning to others, not to commit the like treasonable offences! Let those who would adopt their principles, be admonished by their fate! There is wisdom in the lesson, which it would be Madness in the extreme to disregard.

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IN future times it will be matter of surprise as well as concern, that in this our favoured land a single Briton could be found so wretchedly infatuated, as to wish to exchange the happiness he at present possesses for a novel System, which has been productive merely of plunder, of massacre, and misery. And yet (with regret be it spoken) such discontented characters are there amongst us: men, who would seemingly rejoice in seducing the ignorant, and exciting the profligate to convulse and desolate our country, to rob us of our property, to bereave us of our Lives.

LET every good subject, then, who feels for his family, for his posterity, or for human nature,—who possesses a heart not insensible to the cries of innocence and beauty, or has a hand ready to protect them—approve himself worthy of the blessings he enjoys under our happy Constitution, by contributing his utmost efforts to secure its preservation; and, by constitutional Association, to strengthen the executive branch of the State. By such conduct, he will deservedly obtain the honorable appellation of the true Patriot and virtuous Citizen. And we trust that, by the Favour of our Almighty Protector, the noble and strenuous exertions

exertions which are now making throughout the Island for our home defence, will frustrate the evil machinations, both of our foreign and domestic Foes. 'Tis solely with this laudable, this patriotic Design, that you, my Brethren, to whom I have the Honour this day more immediately to address myself in the capacity of your Chaplain, have, from the voluntary impulse of your own hearts, associated yourselves. You boldly come forward, at this moment of well-founded Alarm, agreeably to your military Oath and solemn obligations, to guard your King and Constitution from all hostile Insults and cruel Devastations: you unite your mutual exertions for the preservation of our Laws, our Liberties, and our very Existence: you zealously join together, hand in hand, and heart with heart, that the prosperity of the State may never be exchanged for confusion and misery. Go on then, and may every success attend you. "We wish you
 "good luck in the name of the Lord." "Behave yourselves
 "valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God;" and may you experience the approbation of your own minds, the gratitude of your country, and the favour of the Almighty.

NOTWITHSTANDING some late disasters which have befallen us, let us not despair of the safety of the State, which our natural firmness and courage, and our natural resources, will still induce us to maintain. Over and above this, the justness of our Cause may well inspire us with additional Vigour and Alacrity, fighting, as we are, under the Banners of the Almighty, for our Altars and our families. We arm not ourselves to invade the property of others, but only to protect our own. And surely it is our duty as Men, as Christians, as Englishmen, to employ both our purses and our swords against the attempts of those who "delight in war, in robbery, and wrong," and sport in the miseries of mankind.

BUT at the same time, my Brethren, that we think our cause is just, and that we may, with humble confidence, hope for the favour of Heaven; we are all ready, I should trust, to acknowledge the insufficiency of our own strength, and to sue for his aid, in whose hands alone is the fate of Nations. It becometh us under our present circumstances, threatened as we now are with domestic and foreign danger, to say with holy David, "I will not trust in my bow: it is

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“ not my Sword that shall help me : but it is Thou, O
 “ God, that savest us from our Enemies ; and puttest them
 “ to confusion that hate us. The Lord is my refuge, and
 “ my God is the strength of my confidence. Unto him
 “ will I flee for succour, and put my trust under the shadow
 “ of his wings.” May this be our language : may it be
 the language of Britons till time shall be no more.

OUR Enemies have cast off all acknowledgment and dependence upon the supreme Being : and we therefore trust that “ the Lord our God” in whom we believe, “ will save
 “ us from their hands ; that all the Kingdoms of the earth
 “ may” thereby perceive “ that he is the Lord.” “ Be strong
 “ then and of good courage : be not afraid or dismayed, for
 “ the battle is not yours, but God’s.” And while you are contending for the cause of God, take also spiritual weapons to your aid : “ take unto you the whole armour of God ;
 “ the sword of the Spirit, the breast-plate of righteousness,
 “ and the shield of faith.” With these you will be able “ to
 “ quench the fiery darts of the wicked ;” with these obtain solid peace in this world, and everlasting felicity in that which is to come. Believe me, Religion, how unnecessary

foever in this our day, some men may consider it, is by no means the least requisite of the Soldier. We allow, indeed, that a sense of honor, or regard for our parent state, may incite men to acquit themselves with credit in the hour of danger; but they cannot inspire that steady courage and heroic ardour, which a firm reliance upon God can alone supply. How greatly then does it behove You, who have undertaken to be the instruments of our defence, to cultivate the principles and the practice of unfeigned Piety! It would give "strength and vigour to your arms, and fight for you against your Enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear." And I need not observe how much we all stand in need, at this perilous Æra, of every support and consolation which Religion can bestow. Fortified with it, we shall be enabled to say, "Though an Host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my Heart be afraid: and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him."

FINALLY, then, my Brethren, let us look up to almighty God, without whose aid all the instruments of war are but weak and vain, to make us prosperous and grant us good success;

success; that we may secure and perpetuate the objects we contend for, viz. our own Independence, and, as connected with this leading object, the general interests of Europe. To this end, may all our jealousies and animosities henceforward be buried in eternal oblivion: and let it be the glory of Britons to dwell together in peace, in unity, and concord. In compliance with the injunction of St. Paul, "Let every soul be subject to the higher Powers." "Ye must needs be subject," says he, necessity requires it; not only a temporal, but a spiritual necessity: "ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." For he tells us, "he that resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God." Let us, then, be true to our King, love our Country, and "meddle not with them that are given to change." "Let us," as a sensible Writer* recommends, "be resolved and faithful to each other; add unanimity to courage and fidelity, and our Phalanx will be impenetrable." And after having faithfully discharged our respective Duties as members of the community, let our ultimate care be, that each of us reform himself. From such a beginning in individuals, a general reformation

* Mr. Miles.

reformation is only to be expected. Then shall we have nothing to apprehend from our remorseless Enemies; but may justly hope that God will look down with favour upon us, "cover our head in the day of battle," and defend this Nation with the shield of his almighty Protection. Under that protection we "shall dwell in safety, and be free from "the" apprehension "of evil." "The Lord shall give "strength unto his People; the Lord shall give his People" the much to be desired "Blessing of Peace."

AND now let us conclude as we begun, with our addresses to the Throne of Mercy for the welfare of our Sovereign: that he, who is the King of Kings, would be pleased to grant him a long life; a happy and undisturbed reign over us: that he would dispose the hearts of all his subjects to obedience, unity, and peace; that he would confound the devices of all his Enemies; that blessings may ever attend his royal Issue; and that his illustrious House may not want a man to stand before him as our King for ever—and let all the People say, Amen.

T H E E N D.